

VZCZCXRO2599

RR RUEHDBU RUEHFL RUEHKW RUEHLA RUEHROV RUEHSR

DE RUEHPG #1250 3251514

ZNY CCCCC ZZH

R 211514Z NOV 07

FM AMEMBASSY PRAGUE

TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 9848

INFO RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE

RUEHUB/USINT HAVANA 0100

C O N F I D E N T I A L PRAGUE 001250

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

WHA/CCA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/21/2012

TAGS: ETRD ETTC PREF CU EZ XG

SUBJECT: CZECH REPUBLIC: REVIEW FOR WAIVER OF TITLE III OF THE LIBERTAD ACT

REF: A. STATE 158768

1B. PRAGUE 1224

Classified By: POLEC Counselor Michael Dodman for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

11. (U) The Czech Republic has a strong record of active engagement and support for democracy, human rights and fundamental freedoms in Cuba. Former Czech President Vaclav Havel, an internationally recognized advocate for human rights, established the Czech government's principled position on Cuba during his administration, following the Czech Republic's own transition from a totalitarian regime in 1989. All subsequent Czech political leaders have continued this policy of support for the peaceful democratic dissident movement in Cuba and have consistently called for the release of all political prisoners. The Czech Republic has not recognized the transfer of power to Raul Castro. The MFA Department for Human Rights and Transition Policy has identified Cuba as one of its "priority countries," and thus provides financial assistance to Czech NGOs, such as People in Need, which provides humanitarian aid, capacity training, and other support for journalists, dissidents and their families.

Czech Leadership within the EU

12. (C) Within the EU, the Czech Republic has been one of our strongest allies on human rights issues, particularly with respect to Cuba. This month after receiving our proposals (reftel B) on ways to promote substantive change within Cuba, the GOCR reached out to other EU member states in an attempt to rally EU support for our proposals. In June of this year the EU Foreign Ministers at the EU GAERC took up their annual review of the "June Measures," which restrict contact between EU members and the Cuba regime. While the EU FMs did agree to suspend the "June Measures," the Czech Republic was instrumental in ensuring the EU did not simply abolish these measures. Among EU countries, the Czechs are also one of the strongest supporters of the policy of inviting Cuban dissidents to National Day festivities.

No Substantive Czech Trade or Investment

13. (U) The Czech Republic does not have any foreign investments in Cuba. As an EU member state, the GOCR does not have any bilateral trade agreements, including with Cuba. There are, however, no trade restriction on private companies that want to do business in Cuba. According to the Ministry of Industry Trade (MPO), private trade between the two nations fell significantly in 2007. The Czech Statistical Office reported that trade with Cuba totalled

US\$34 million in 2006, but during the first nine months of 2007, Czech trade with Cuba was around US\$16 million. There are no student exchange programs.

¶4. (C) Comment: A waiver of the right to bring an action against entities and nationals of the Czech Republic is necessary to U.S. national interests. Loss of this waiver would jeopardize our partnership with a country that has been leading the way on efforts to force the Cuban regime to meet international standards of human rights. Our cooperation would definitely be negatively affected if the GOCR were to lose the Title III waiver, especially since it has been one of our best partners on Cuba and certainly has one of the highest profiles within the EU on promotion of human rights issues around the world.

Graber